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Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Statement submitted by All India Women's Education Fund Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/2004/100.

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The NGOs in India form a very large network and work in cooperation with Government and in collaboration with the Corporate Sector. They have been able to reach people in remote and inaccessible areas, identify various needs and channelize resources to fulfill these needs.

AIWEFA has been fortunate in getting into this network of NGOs and take up the task of regional coordinator for UN IRENE. In this capacity, various activities have been undertaken by the networking partners and focused in the discussions organized in various regional workshops. The vision that has emerged in this massive exercise is –

1. Eradication of poverty;

2. Ensure dignity of the person; and

3. Capacity building – mental and physical of all persons.

This vision encompasses the millennium development goals which are guiding development in this vast country of a billion population. Special attention to the majority (70%) living in rural areas and the large section of indigenous people living in more precarious conditions with inadequate infrastructure and poor access to the instruments of advancement.

Communication and information technology which is transforming the world has made a dent in the development process in India. We, in the NGO sector, are conscious of the digital divide and are taking small steps to bridge the gap by not only imparting knowledge and awareness but also providing access to infrastructure for education, computer knowledge and skill development for economic advancement.

Our efforts at attacking malnourishment and morbidity in rural areas, particularly of women and children have paid great dividends. We have been able to create awareness of nutrition, better health, prevention of diseases etc. Lending a hand in improving their access to safe drinking water and sanitation has been a significant achievement. In the near future, this will enable the community to transform their lives.

Efforts at legal awareness has helped in improving their self-image and safeguarding the dignity of the person. Many of our networking partners have been able to introduce the community to the institutions of governance. We are aware of the immense work that needs to be done in this area to empower communities for better governance with greater capacity building.

In this era of scientific advancement and knowledge based development, we are striving to provide information through Self Help Groups, village adoption programmes, access to commercial institutions and other resources for education, skill development, training and welfare.

The partnership with corporate agencies has been beneficial both to the NGO sector and to corporations are achieving their social development objectives.

The special focus recently in our regional workshops has been on the "Challenge to Development – Survival of Girl Child – Women Empowerment". This received emphasis in all the deliberations as the social mindset leaning towards patriarchy on the one side, and greedy commercialization of medical technology on the other, seemed to be annihilating the female of the species, as brought out in the declining juvenile sex ratio in the country in the 2001 Census. There was an urgency to restore dignity to the female, the women of the future. The impact has been very strong.